

HENRY CLAY BULL HOUSE
195 East Third Street (north-
west corner of Third Street
& Mooers Avenue)
Cokato
Wright County
Minnesota

HABS NO. MN-89

HABS
MINN,
86-COKA,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
HENRY CLAY BULL HOUSE

HABS NO. MN-89

Location: 195 East Third Street (northwest corner of
Third Street and Mooers Avenue), Cokato,
Minnesota 55321 (Wright County)

Present Owner: Dokken Estate
195 East Third Street
Cokato, Mn. 55321

Present Occupant: None - vacant since 1987

Significance: The Henry Clay Bull House is a two story wood frame building on which construction began in 1878. The building is closely associated with Henry C. Bull, one of Wright County's prominent businessmen and financiers. Bull was a promoter of various enterprises that contributed to the commercial and industrial growth of the City of Cokato in particular and to Wright County in general.

Born in Jefferson County, New York, in September of 1843, he arrived in Wright County in 1868. In that year he both secured a contract for supplying ties to the Great Northern Railroad Company, and effected the organization of Stockholm township, of which he became supervisor of the board. In the following years he engaged in the mercantile business at the townsite of Collinwood. Sensing that the townsite would not develop he moved to Cokato village. He established in Cokato the headquarters of his various business enterprises and promoted their future. Mr. Bull established the Standard Elevator Company, promoted and sold railroad lands, and organized the Farmers Elevator Company, the Cokato Creamery Association, and Cokato Canning Company. Later, he established banks in Stearns, Meeker and Wright County. Henry Bull was also involved in local and county politics, elected State Legislator in 1890 and died in 1930. Henry C. Bull House is significant for its association with one of the county's prominent businessmen and financiers.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction 1878-79 and occupied by Henry Clay Bull.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of titles to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Wright County Court House in Buffalo, Minnesota.

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- 1878 Deed November 12, 1878 recorded November 1878
Book W of deeds - page 607
Albert Dubry and Frances E. his wife to H.C. Bull
- 1931 Probate deed dated September 11, 1931 recorded in
book 101 of deeds on page 566. The estate of
H.C. Bull to Ole Olson.
- 1935 Warranty Deed dates May 16, 1935 in book 115 of
deeds - page 232 from Ole Olson to Arthur Thompson.
- 1939 to present - Warranty Deed dated February 3, 1939 in
book 110 of deeds - page 552 from Arthur & Hazel
Thompson to Elmer T. and Altha Dokken.

3. Original Plans and Construction: No original drawings or plans have been located although early photographer indicates the building was a two and one-half story wood frame home with the hexagonal corner tower on the front facade.
4. Alterations and additions: No exterior additions or interior alternatives are known.

B. Historical Context:

The H.C. Bull House was built in the late 1870's by one of the leading families in the Cokato area. Born on September 29, 1843, in Rural Hill, Jefferson County, New York, Mr. Bull spent his early years in the east. In 1867, he migrated to Minneapolis, Minnesota, and later established residence on the east side of Collinwood Lake near the City of Cokato. He established a general store, became a Justice of the Peace and then a Commissioner for Meeker County.

With the expansion of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Mr. Bull owned a real estate and loan office and moved to Cokato.

Eventually, the business was organized as the State Bank of Cokato. In 1891 Mr. Bull was also elected to the state legislature. Later, Henry Bull donated \$25,000 for the construction of a public library and auditorium in Cokato. In addition, Mr. Bull donated his personal library of some four hundred volumes, several pieces of furniture, a large collection of mounted birds and fish as well as in interesting variety of articles of historical interest.

Henry C. Bull died in December 1930 in Riverside, California. Since his death, the house has been used principally for residential and and as a mortuary.

PART II. ARCHITECTUAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Although the house does not represent a traditional style, it does contain numerous design features characteristic of the Italianate and Queen Ann styles. The bay/oriel windows balustrated porches and coupled brackets on the eaveline are all characteristics of the Italianate Style.
2. Condition of the Structure: The exterior and interior is rapidly deteriorating due to the lack of maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The two and one-half story house has a unfinished cellar under half of the structure. The building dimensions are measured at 35 feet and 20 feet and features a hexagonal tower on the front facade.
2. Structural system (framing): exterior/walls and major partition walls throughout are wood and load bearing. Floor joists are 2 x 12's and 16" on center. Roof rafters are 2 x 6's and 16" on center.
3. Porches: The entrance balustrated porch 6' x 8' with a wood flooring, rail and steps. The west porch also has wood flooring and roof construction. The rear service area and steps are of wood construction, in bad state of repair.
4. Chimneys: There are two main chimneys serving the property.
5. Windows: There are bay and a three sided oriel windows. Typical windows for the first and second floor are double hung wood sash, each with a single pane. The opening dimension are 3 feet wide by 7 feet high.
6. Roof: Is composed of intersecting hips, covered with cedar shakes with a irregular roof line. The roof condition is in very poor state of repair.
 - a. Tower: hexagon corner tower dominates the front facade.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plan: cellar under the south quadrant of the structure is a cellar 12' x 26' in size with a dirt floor and unfinished walls and ceiling.
2. First Floor: as you enter the structure there is a dining area to the right and living area to the left. A secondary room to the right served as a first floor bedroom. A kitchen pantry area was located adjacent to the dining room. One narrow stairway off the dining area led to the second floor.

3. Flooring: The original floor is a hardwood pine but is now covered with carpeting wall to wall. The kitchen and bathroom are covered with linoleum.
4. Wall & Ceiling Finish: areas are plastered and usually painted white. Some rooms are papered.
5. Decorative features: none
6. Lighting Fixtures: None - all removed
7. Heating: one gas forced gravity air unit located in the cellar.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: Situated on the northwest corner of Third Street and Mooers Ave. at the Eastern side of the business district. The lot is irregular shaped consisting of less than one acre.
2. Outbuildings: Located on the west side and in the rear of the structure is a garage and storage building 12' wide X 20' length in a very poor condition.
3. Landscaping: The lot has been badly neglected over recent years.

Prepared by:

Don Levens, City Administrator
City of Cokato
Cokato, Mn. 55321
June 1988

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Cokato Historical Society, Cokato Minnesota
- B. Minnesota Historical Society, Fort Snelling Center, St. Paul, Mn. 55111